

To YOU, Who Is Jesus?

AND how is your answer influencing your daily life?

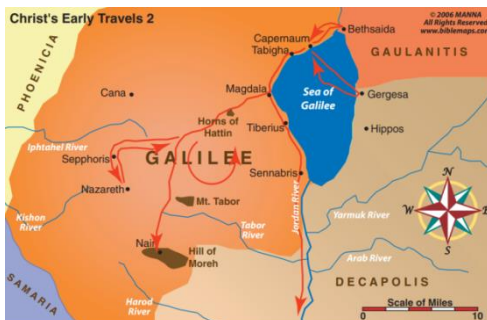
Saturday, 8/23 at 4:00 | Sunday, 8/24 at 9:00

12th Sunday after Pentecost / 11th Sunday after Trinity – 2020

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Tell me: What matters the most – what we SAY or what we DO...? // Yes, what we DO; WORDS are easy, *but ACTIONS verify our words!*

Today we will ➡ consider who Jesus is AND ➡ ask the HS to make Jesus more a part of our lives! What happened before today's gospel reading?

⇒ **Matthew 14:** We focused on Peter walking on the water, along with Jesus. The boat left from Galilee—a **Jewish** region and



arrived in the Decapolis—a **Gentile** region (see map). When the people there recognized Jesus, many sick people were brought, and those who touched the fringe of His garment were made well.

- ⇒ **Matthew 15**: Some Pharisees and Scribes – *apparently on official business* – tracked Jesus down to ask why His disciples broke the hand-washing tradition. Jesus responded by asking them *why they put their traditions OVER the command of God*. Then, *calling them hypocrites – ACTORS*, He directed these words of Isaiah at them: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Matt. 15:8 NIV); in other words, *their hearts DID NOT AGREE with their words!*
- ⇒ **Matthew 16**: Some Pharisees and Sadducees wanted Jesus to give them a miraculous sign to prove He was the Messiah, but Jesus told them that no sign would be given “except the sign of Jonah” (4). Then Jesus warned His disciples to NOT believe their false teachings! We now come to today’s gospel reading...

1. **Who Do Others Say I am?** ¹³ **Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi** [a Roman city, to the north of the Sea of Galilee], **He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”** ¹⁴ **And they said, “Some [indeed] say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”** // Jesus asked because He wanted to show the sharp contrast between what others thought and His disciples believed. Think about the opinions of others... John, Elijah, Jeremiah! For anyone else, *such opinions would be very complimentary*; however, such men – *though men of great faith and faithfulness* – were mere men, *even sinful men*, in need of the Messiah, the Christ.
2. **Who Do You Say I am?** ¹⁵ **He said to them, “But [you] who do you say that I am?”** ¹⁶ **Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** ¹⁷ **And**

Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona [son of Jonah], because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”

- a. For us, *we can only hear what someone says*. For Jesus, *He heard Peter’s words and read Peter’s heart!* Jesus knows everything, *even our most secret thoughts!* Therefore, let us repent wherever necessary – *so that our words always agree with our hearts!*
- b. Jesus is the Messiah/the Christ (the Anointed One); *the Promised Descendant of Eve who would destroy the works of the devil* (Gen. 3:15; 1 John 3:7-8). For all who know the truth about Jesus, *God has made that known*, so let give Him thanks!

3. **What Is the Foundation of the Church?** ¹⁸ **“I also say to you that you are Peter [Πέτρος, stone], and upon this rock [πέτρα, bedrock] I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. // In Greek Πέτρος and πέτρα sound similar; both are in the rock family; however, Πέτρος means stone while πέτρα means bedrock! So what is the foundation of the Church? Is it Peter? No, he is only a stone. The foundation is **THE FACT** that **“Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** Can the forces of evil destroy the Church – the body of believers? They have been trying AND will keep trying, *but they will not succeed!***

4. **Who Holds the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven?** ¹⁹ **“I will give you [singular, Peter] the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”**

- a. With **those** words, *Jesus spoke to Peter*. With **these** words in [Matthew 18](#), *Jesus spoke to all of His disciples: “Truly I say to you, whatever you [*plural, my disciples*] bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven” (v. 18 NAU).*
- b. What do those words mean? Jesus said, **“I WILL give...”** Not yet, but I will – *probably pointing ahead to the Day of Pentecost*. And what about binding and loosing? Luther wrote: **“The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent”** (*Small Catechism*). Pastors are authorized to do so publicly, *all believers privately*. Also, *since none of us can see the heart – the motive*, we must base our determination of a person’s words and deeds.

5. **Why Keep Jesus’ Identity a Secret?** ²⁰ **Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He [is] the Christ.** // The Son of God came to be the Christ, *to remove the sins of the world*; however, many thought the Christ would be a great earthly king. So it was best for Jesus to keep His identity a secret *until He completed His work!*

Let Us Pray: Dear Jesus, *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!* Father, *TY for revealing that saving truth to us!* HS, *TY for faith to trust in Jesus!* With Him we have everything we need; without Him we have nothing of true value or longevity. Therefore, change our **♥** desires, **♥** thoughts, **♥** words, and **♥** deeds, *so that they align with Jesus!*

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